



## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

### News Release

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GOVERNOR

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### **HAWAII UNEMPLOYMENT RATE DROPS TO 4.3 PERCENT**

#### **Non-Agriculture Jobs Rise**

**HONOLULU-** The State of Hawaii Department of Labor & Industrial Relations announced today that the statewide seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate in September was 4.3 percent, a decrease from 4.4 percent in August. Nationally, the unemployment rate for September was 5.8 percent, declining from 6.0 percent in August. For the first nine months of 2003, Hawaii's average unemployment rate was 3.9 percent. In September, the statewide labor force totaled 602,100, and was comprised of 576,100 employed and 26,000 unemployed.

"The Lingle administration is encouraged that Hawaii has consistently maintained a low unemployment rate for a considerable length of time," said Nelson Befitel, Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. "This is a key indicator that we are on the right track in expanding and diversifying the State economy, while creating quality jobs for our residents."

In a separate measure of the rise in employment in the state, total non-agricultural jobs in Hawaii increased by 700 jobs in September over August. Most of the job gains occurred in public and private education. State education grew by 3,300 jobs, largely due to fall staffing demands at the Department of Education. For similar reasons, employment at Hawaii's private

colleges contributed to the bulk of the job gains in private education, which expanded by 500 jobs.

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